

**Mr. John Spear's Report to the Local Government Board upon
a re-inspection of the Ebbw Vale and Abertillery Urban
Sanitary Districts, and of the Bedwelty Rural District,
Monmouthshire.**

GEORGE BUCHANAN,
Medical Department,
March 12, 1885:

The registration district of Bedwelty, so far as it embraces the above-named sanitary areas, was inspected by me on behalf of the Board at the close of 1882. The mortality from scarlatina and enteric fever, then the main subject of inquiry, continued high during 1883, whilst the Board obtained little evidence from the communications which reached them from the several local authorities that the sanitary action shown to be required was being forwarded. Hence this second inspection. I propose in this Report to deal separately with the three districts.

I.—THE EBBW VALE URBAN SANITARY DISTRICT.

Area, 6,150 acres. Population 1881 (corrected), 16,086; estimated at the end of 1884, 17,000. Rateable value, 42,000*l.* Rate (1884), 2*s.* 4*d.* in the *£*.*

The district, it may be remembered, comprises several detached villages—Briery Hill, Chapel Town, Church Town, and New Town, on either side of the River Ebbw, in the centre of the district, Beaufort about two miles up the stream, and Victoria, Cwm, and now a new village, Wainellwyd, one and a half to four miles lower down. The population, except for a few traders living principally in Briery Hill, the central village, is almost exclusively dependent upon employment given by the Ebbw Coal and Iron Company. Of the houses in the district, now nearly 3,000, some 1,350 are owned by this company, and 170 others are leased by them for the accommodation of their work-people. The building now going on is mainly at the instance of the same body, the exceptions to this rule being found in the central villages.

Vital Statistics.—Table No. I. (on the other side) shows the mortality from various causes in recent years.

Sanitary Progress and present Sanitary Condition.—The recommendations made to this Authority by the Board after consideration of my last report were as follows:—1, to provide for the sewerage of the more populous places; 2, to improve the privy-accommodation of the district; 3, to provide for the regular and systematic emptying of privies, and the removal of refuse; 4, to deal with polluted water-supplies and to extend the public water mains; 5, to take action under section 97 of the Public Health Act, 1875, in respect of houses unfit for habitation, and under sections 92, 94, and 95 as to the removal of nuisances generally; 6, to adopt byelaws based upon the Board's model code; 7, to provide hospital accommodation for the isolation of infectious diseases. It will be convenient to deal with these matters seriatim.

1. *Sewerage.*—A sewer has been laid at Cwm, a small outlying hamlet, and one is now being constructed at Wainellwyd. At Chapel Town a plan of sewerage has been

* This includes the rate levied by the Authority for all purposes; and an amount equal to about 7½*d.* in the *£* of this rate is devoted to the repayment of loans, &c., on account of waterworks which are in the hands of the Authority; the water-rate being, of course, correspondingly lightened.

TABLE No. I.

Years.	Population.	Births.	Birth-rate.	Total Deaths.	Death-rate (per 1,000 of population).	Deaths under 1 year of age.	Deaths under 1 year of age to 1,000 births registered.	Rate per 1,000 from seven principal Zymotic Diseases.	Small-pox.	Measles.	Scarlatina.	Diphtheria.	Whooping Cough.	Fever.*	Diarrhea.	Phthisis.	Bronchitis, Pneumonia, Pleurisy.
1881 -	16,086	511	31·8	337	21·0	70	137	2·5	—	—	21	—	3	15	2	20	111
1882 -	Estimated 16,250	592	36·4	468	28·8	100	169	9·6	—	14	132	—	2	6	2	31	93
1883 -	16,430	631	38·4	482	29·3	129	205	8·2	—	18	75	1	19	18	4	27	116
1884 -	16,615	678	40·8	298	17·9	90	133	1·5	—	—	12	1	2	8	2	23	91
Average annual rate per 1,000 of population (1881-84) -	—	—	—	—	24·2	—	—	5·5	—	0·5	3·7	0·03	0·4	0·73	0·15	1·6	6·3
Average rate of England and Wales (2 years 1881-2) }	—	—	33·8	—	19·22	—	135	2·35	0·08	0·38	0·53	0·13	0·5	0·13	0·60	1·8	3·6

* Probably all typhoid.

approved by the Authority, but the work is not commenced. For Briery Hill plans are being prepared. I am told that it is the intention of the Authority that the sewerage of the whole district shall be proceeded with, but very gradually, so that the charges may be defrayed out of current rates. The plans which have so far been prepared contemplate the discharge of sewage unpurified into the Ebbw, although small plots of land, generally obtainable at the points of discharge, are regarded as affording facilities for this purification at some future time.

There are certain obvious objections to the course proposed by the Authority. In the first place, the discharge of sewage unpurified into the brook, although the latter is much befouled by coal-washings and other refuse from manufacturing works, is in contravention of the provisions of the Rivers Pollution Prevention Act, 1876. Then the nuisances that now exist, owing to the absence of sewers and proper house drains, are very serious and wide-spread. Almost everywhere about the older property, and occasionally about the more modern, sewage is now fouling the soil and atmosphere, stagnating in uneven and roughly constructed surface channels, accumulating in small pools, or running in mere gutters that it has made for itself over the bare earth; and at Briery Hill and Chapel Town the principal part eventually finds its way into a more or less stagnant pond—the “feeder” for the supply of engine boilers—and there again gives rise to nuisance. The plan proposed by the Authority will not provide a sufficiently speedy remedy for all this. To do the necessary sewerage work out of current rates, and with, as it were, the ordinary staff, years must elapse before it is completed. It would seem certainly necessary that the Authority should in this matter avail themselves of the borrowing powers conferred by the Public Health Act of 1875 for the purpose of the execution of permanent works; and, when the main sewerage is completed, the provisions of the 150th section of that Act, for compelling the sewerage, paving, &c., of private streets, should be actively enforced.

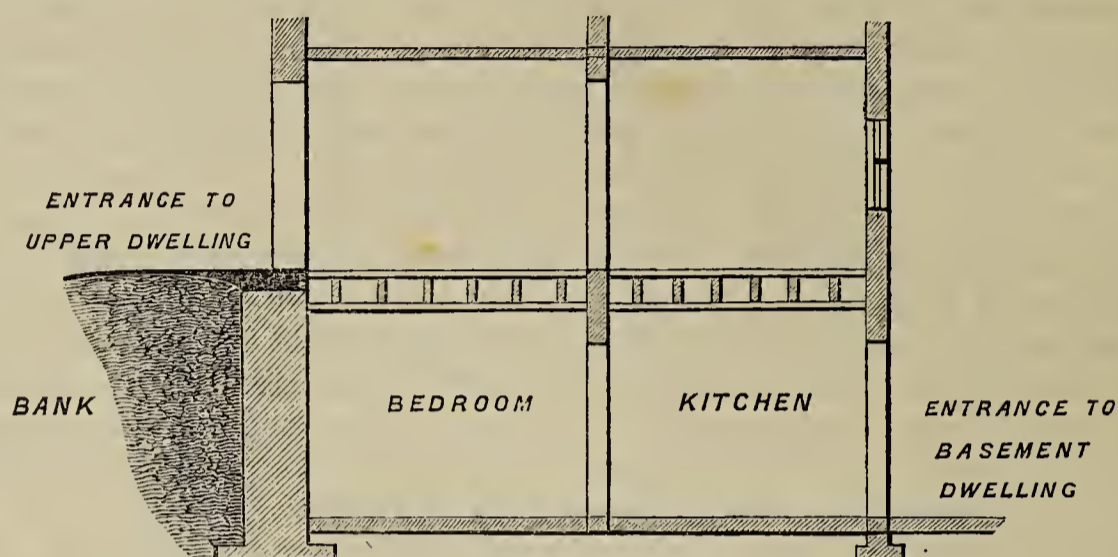
2 and 3. In the matter both of *privy accommodation and scavenging* considerable improvement is observable, and the improvement has been commenced in a systematic manner, with the evident intention that it shall become general. New houses are now all supplied with a closet of the Manchester pattern—a pail for excrement, with means for the application of fine ashes from a cinder-sifter; and some 400 old houses, previously destitute of privy-accommodation, have been similarly provided within the last few months. Except for one or two minor details, which will in future be attended to, the plan upon which these new closets are constructed, and the materials used, are satisfactory. The regular and systematic emptying of the pails was decided upon by resolution of the Authority in January 1883, and the arrangements for this purpose, although not of the very best (that is to say, the substitution of a *clean* pail whenever the charged one is emptied is not provided for), are yet fairly adequate; and it is contemplated that a daily emptying of pails will be the rule. Occasionally the situation chosen for the new closets is hardly such as to afford sufficiently ready means of access to the scavengers—a matter of prime importance when emptying must be so frequent; although, on the other hand, back ways, properly metalled and channelled, have been specially provided for this purpose in connexion with certain of the rows of houses belonging to the Ebbw company.

The remaining houses of the district, some 2,300 in number, possess, most commonly, no privy-accommodation whatever, and a good deal of excrement is scattered about the vacant spaces; elsewhere, the old privy-pit, or a privy built over some surface gutter, is the occasion of even greater nuisance. The work, however, of remedying this state of things is, as I have said, progressing; and I am informed that it is the intention of the Ebbw company to deal with all the rows of dwellings in their possession in the manner above described as speedily as possible.

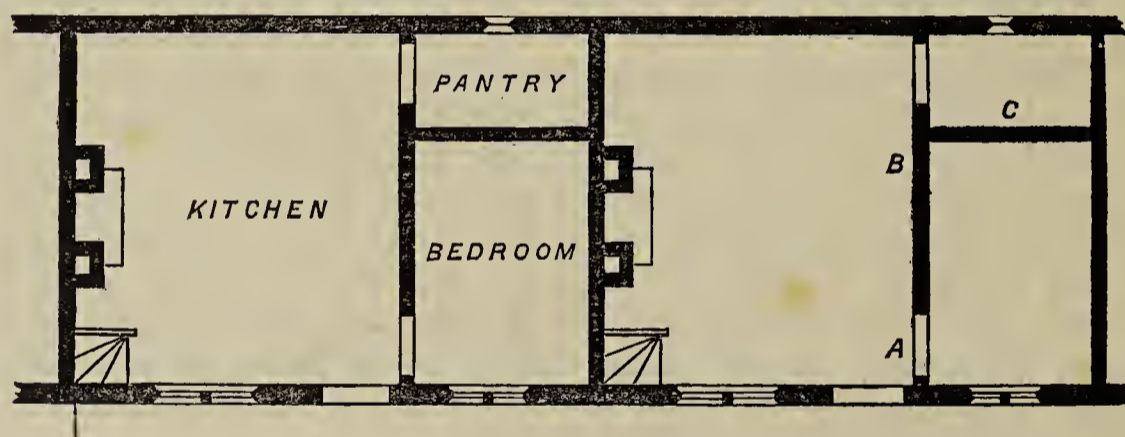
The removal of ashes, and of such house-refuse or excrement as may be mixed with the ashes and deposited in the open roadways for removal, is contracted for by the Authority. With two or three exceptions I saw no excessive recent accumulation of this sort, and in the greater part of the district a daily visit of the contractors' carts is the rule.

4. *Water Supply*.—The position of the district in the matter of water-supply, so far as accomplished change is concerned, is the same as that at the time of my former inspection. Sanction has, however, been obtained for loans for the extension of the public water-mains, and this work is to be immediately proceeded with. The whole district, except the small village of Cwm, which will still have to procure its supply from mountain rills, will then be brought within the range of the public service.

5. *House Accommodation*.—There has been very little improvement in the actual structural condition of the old property. A few pairs of back-to-back houses have been converted into single dwellings, and in a few places attempts have been made to combat the evil of dampness by trenching, &c., along the base of house-walls. Such action, however, has been of trifling amount compared with what is required; and then there are a number of dwellings that hardly any structural alteration could render fit for occupation, or at least for *separate* occupation. For example, the sort of dual contrivance depicted in the annexed sketch was much in favour in past times in all this part of the country. One of the two rooms of the basement dwelling (the one almost necessarily used as the sleeping apartment) is occasionally, as in the example given, a mere cellar, deriving its sole supply of light and air from the kitchen in front. Such dwellings should either be closed, or they should be connected with the upper rooms, and the whole building let in one occupation.



As to very many other cottages, much might be done at small expense to remedy defects of ventilation. For example, many rows of houses are built on the plan of the annexed sketch. There is, it will be seen, no proper through-ventilation of the rooms; and the objection generally entertained to the placing of a door or window in the back wall of cottages only one room deep, and that room very small, is not without reason.



Steps leading to attic (the latter generally unceiled).

The kitchen, having its fireplace and fire, suffers least, and if the tiny window in the pantry will open some slight through current of air is obtainable in the kitchen from that point. In the bedroom, however, there are no possibilities of this kind, and the room is invariably very close. The kitchen flue of the adjoining house might be utilized to remedy this, or the door might be moved from the point A to B, or an opening might be made through the wall at c to the open air. The best plan perhaps to suggest would be to board off the top of the pantry so as to make a sort of hollow ceiling, to ventilate this space by a permanent opening through the back wall to the outer air, and then to ventilate both bedroom and kitchen into this space, the one by an opening high in the wall at c, the other by one over the pantry door. Both rooms would thus be provided with cross-ventilation independently of the pantry, and sufficiently under control. There should, of course, be facilities for the removal of dust from any space through which the air-supply passes.

In some such way as this the ventilation of most of the older cottage property might be materially improved, and this, in itself, would do something to remedy the excessive dampness which is so common a feature of this class of property. In addition, however, the thick, porous, stone walls must be protected from external moisture—at the ground



level, by proper drainage and channelling, by the paving of immediately adjacent surfaces, and, if need be, by the levelling of injurious inequalities of surface; and at the roof by proper spouting now almost everywhere absent.

Referring to the considerable amount of new house property, the greater attention now, with a few exceptions, paid to the requirements of health is most satisfactory, and the greater regard evinced for comfort, too, will no doubt result in raising the standard of house accommodation throughout the district. In the central villages there are instances, amongst the houses erected by individual owners, of what may be termed "jerry" building—the rooms too small, the staircases ill-lighted, the woodwork slim and ill-seasoned, the mortar crumbling, and the yards unpaved; but these cases are exceptional. At Wainellwyd, quite a new village has been built by the Ebbw company. The houses are commodious, the staircases well lighted, rooms are, except for a rare oversight, fairly ventilated; yard surfaces are paved; streets are metalled, flagged and channelled; slop-water drains are provided; each house has its properly constructed pail closet; a temporary water supply has been laid on to stand-pipes pending the extension of the public mains. The only adverse criticism that I felt called upon to make with respect to these houses was due to the fact that in a few cases the back walls of lower rooms had, contrary to the requirements of one of the byelaws of the Authority, been built against earth banks; and secondly, that the precaution of providing a damp-proof course in house walls had not been observed.

Although building has been going on thus rapidly, still there is a scarcity of houses. Some few of the older dwellings are overcrowded, estimating their condition simply by the amount of air-space per individual, and if their inadequate ventilation be taken into account, very many more would come into the same category. The taking of lodgers is a common practice, and it would no doubt be advantageous were the Authority to obtain and put into operation byelaws under the 90th section of the Public Health Act.

No common lodging-house are registered in the district. One house that I saw at Victoria, provided by the Ebbw company for the accommodation of 19 single men, was a model of what such a lodging-house should be. It was said, however, not to be much appreciated. There are certain regulations as to the time of its closure at night, &c., and this probably accounts for its comparative neglect by the younger men.

6. *Byelaws*.—These have not yet been revised, although a committee was appointed some time ago for the purpose. The readiness with which suggestions of the Medical Officer of Health and Surveyor (both able and energetic officers) are attended to by the Ebbw company may diminish the urgency of the matter, but still the reform of the byelaws should be proceeded with without unnecessary delay. The regulations with respect to the prevention of dampness and the construction of house-drainage are those most needing revision. The byelaw belonging to the Authority's present code to which I have already referred as prohibiting the building of house-walls directly against earth banks deals with a method of building that certainly requires special regulation.

7. *Hospital Accommodation, Disinfecting-Chamber, and Mortuary*.—None of these have yet been provided, although the sanitary history of the district, as I pointed out in my last report, shows how really invaluable they might on occasions have been. In the first 11 months of 1884, although the mortality from zymotic diseases had then largely diminished, no less than 113 cases of scarlet fever were reported to the Medical Officer of Health.

At an interview which I had with the Authority before leaving the district, the Chairman promised on the Authority's behalf careful attention to this and the other matters referred to in the foregoing pages.

II.—THE ABERTILLERY URBAN SANITARY DISTRICT.

Area, 4,550 acres. Population (1881) 6,000; estimated at the end of 1884, 6,300. Rateable value, 20,000*l*. Rate (including that levied by the Authority for all purposes) 1*s*. 8*d*. in the £ (1884).

This district also is composed of detached villages. Abertillery, the central and most populous, is situated in the narrow and rugged valley of the Tillery; Cwm Tillery, in the valley of one of the small affluents of that stream; and Blaina Gwent higher on one of the mountain sides. The population is almost exclusively engaged in coal mining, and iron or tin working; and much of the property of the central village, and nearly all that of the outlying ones, is in the hands of the proprietors of the several works. Building is going on briskly both at Abertillery and Cwm Tillery.

Table No. II. shows the mortality from all causes and from various specified diseases during recent years:—

TABLE No. II.

Years.	Population.	Births.	Total Deaths.	Death-rate (per 1,000 of Population).	Deaths under 1 year of age.	Deaths under 1 year of age to 1,000 Births.	Rate per 1,000 from Seven Zymotic Diseases.	No. of Deaths from								
								Small-pox.	Measles.	Scarlatina.	Diphtheria.	Whooping Cough.	Fever (Typhoid).	Diarrhœa.	Phthisis.	Bronchitis, Pneumonia, &c.
1880 - -	5,900	246	114	19·3	33	134	2·4	—	3	—	—	—	6	5	8	25
1881 - -	6,000	272	161	26·8	53	195	6·5	—	2	23	—	7	5	2	6	33
1882 - -	6,060	261	160	26·4	42	161	8·4	—	—	28	—	3	19	1	7	33
1883 - -	Estimated 6,160	298	198	32·1	41	138	11·2	—	43	4	—	—	20	2	12	29
1884 - -	6,260	306	137	21·9	56	183	2·7	—	—	10	1	—	1	5	9	18
Average annual rate per 1,000 of population (1880-84).		—	—	25·3	—	—	6·2	—	1·6	2·1	—	0·3	1·7	0·5	1·4	4·5
Average rates of England and Wales (two years, 1881-1882) - -		—	—	19·22	—	135	2·3	0·08	0·38	0·53	0·13	0·5	0·13	0·6	1·8	3·6

The prevalence of typhoid fever during 1882 was one chief subject of my former inquiry in this district. In the following year (1883) an even more serious outbreak of this disease occurred, and in 1884, although no fatal case was recorded, some 23 attacks came under notice. Speaking of the outbreak of 1883, one estimate put the number of cases that occurred as high as 500, and 191 actually came under the treatment of Dr. Williams, the Medical Officer of Health. So far as sporadic cases were concerned, the disease was widely diffused, but the epidemic outburst was confined to the village of Abertillery, and, as in the outbreak of 1882, to those localities where not only gross sewage nuisances prevailed, but where the water-supply was drawn from highly dangerous sources. Thus the first serious outbreak occurred in August at Rhew Park. At the time, owing to the entire absence of sewers, and of any proper privy-accommodation, sewage nuisances had accumulated around the ill-ventilated dwellings; and water, as is still the case, was derived from "runners," or small rills, exposed to excremental pollution. At this place eleven families were invaded by the disease. A little later, a family at "Mount Pleasant," on friendly and visiting terms with some of the sufferers at Rhew Park, was infected, and then again another family in the same row of houses. Amongst other defects here—defects sufficiently grave to render the houses unfit for habitation—excrement is cast into a privy-pit over the floor of which washes a mountain rill that just below supplies water, habitually for washing purposes, and occasionally it is admitted for drinking, to a considerable district. This district was afterwards deeply infected. In Byewaters Row six households were invaded; in James Street, ten; in Mitre Street, fourteen; and in Cwm Street, twelve. The above-mentioned rill is not the only water-supply resorted to here, but the others are probably also contaminated, although less obviously, from the sewage nuisances accumulating around Mount Pleasant on the higher ground. "Cobbler's Tump," a locality adjacent, suffered scarcely less severely. No sewerage is provided, and water for all purposes is derived from "runners" which immediately before have washed over steep, and periodically manured, grass slopes. At the time of my visit, this water was trickling, just before its collection, through excremental filth.*

The measures that were recommended to the Authority by the Board after my last inspection were as follows:—1, The sewerage of the more populous localities; 2, The improvement of privy-accommodation; 3, The regular and systematic emptying of privies and the removal of refuse; 4, The extension of the water mains to localities not having a proper water supply; 5, The enforcement of the provisions of the Public Health Act as regards houses unfit for habitation, and as to the removal of nuisances generally; 6, The strict enforcement of the building byelaws; 7, The provision of a hospital for infectious diseases, and of a disinfecting-chamber, and mortuary.

Sewerage and Privy-accommodation, &c.—The attention of the Authority, since the date of these recommendations, has mainly been confined to sewerage improvements, and these have only been progressing slowly; they are paid for out of current rates, and the latter, as already stated, are very low. Six streets have been sewered by the construction of 1,250 yards of main sewer, 129 house connexions have been made, and 49 privy-pits have been converted into water-closets or pan-closets.

Elsewhere, in places not affected by these new sewerage works, the prevalence of filth nuisances is very serious. A large number of houses are without any sort of privy accommodation, and with only roughly constructed, and often stagnant, surface channels, even if this, for the removal of slop-water. In other cases, either the old offensive privy-pit is in use, or privies are built over, and slop water is emptied into, highway culverts. The latter become thus mere sewers, although rudely constructed, and provided with none of the proper appliances for the prevention of the escape of offensive gases in the neighbourhood of dwellings.

Although the Authority have as yet provided sewers for only so inconsiderable a part of this district, no alternative provision has been made by them for the removal of excrement. Ashes and house-refuse are removed in the central village periodically by the public scavengers, and elsewhere at irregular and too infrequent intervals, but the emptying of privies is left to owners or occupiers of property to arrange for.

The new sewers are laid at such a gradient that natural flushing will probably be secured; ventilation, however, is hardly sufficiently provided for. The complete dis-

* It was said that a sample of this water recently taken for analysis had been pronounced fit for drinking purposes, but it is obvious that one or even several analyses of a constantly running stream, such as is here described, cannot afford evidence comparable in value to that derived from a simple inspection of the source of supply.

connexion of house drains, closets, &c., from the old highway culverts, so soon as sewers come to be supplied, is obviously a matter of importance, and one that needs very careful supervision.

In the construction of *house-drains*, several necessary principles are disregarded. Byelaws Nos. 62, 63, and 65, as to the construction of drains carried beneath buildings, and as to the trapping and ventilation of all private drains and sewers, are habitually infringed; so also are byelaws Nos. 68 and 69, as to the lighting and ventilation of closets, and the provision of water to closets for flushing purposes. In a few cases I found that houses were being erected without any provision for drainage, and with the most objectionable form of privy-accommodation.

Other departures from important requirements of the byelaws may be noted here. No. 10, which prescribes the covering of a house site with concrete (a measure of special value where dampness of site is so common a feature) is entirely ignored. Nos. 56 and 17, as to the provision respectively of ventilation under the floors of basement rooms and of damp-proof courses in house walls, are often neglected; so also is byelaw 58, as to the ventilation of small rooms.

The house accommodation appears to be at present insufficient for the requirements of the district. New houses are occupied before they are completed, and whilst the walls are reeking with moisture; and in various parts of the district I found instances of overcrowding. A certain number of the older dwellings are, from structural defects, unfit for human habitation.

I have already alluded to the nature of the water supplies upon which a large proportion of the district is dependent. The Authority have accomplished little or nothing in this respect since my last visit. No doubt they have had great difficulties to contend with. The private company whose powers extend over Abertillery did not carry out in its entirety the original scheme of water supply with which, at the time of obtaining their powers, they went to Parliament; and the reasonable requirements of the district have not in consequence been met. Water has been drawn by the company from time to time, whenever better supplies have run low, from sources that are liable to excremental pollution; it is, according to a large amount of testimony, and according to the statements of the sanitary officials, often obviously dirty in appearance, and sometimes objectionable to taste and smell. No doubt great difficulty has been experienced in insisting upon the extension of a water supply of this character, and failing such extension the use of objectionable local supplies is at present unavoidable. I am given to understand by the officials of the company that improved methods of collection of the water are about to be undertaken.

The Authority have not yet provided either hospital accommodation for infectious diseases or disinfecting chambers, or mortuary; nor did I find that the subject of such provision had been seriously considered.

At an interview which I had with the Authority resolutions were passed instructing the surveyor to prepare plans for the sewerage of the whole district, and ordering that in future the building byelaws should be strictly enforced; it was understood also that action was to be taken, under the provisions of the Public Health Act, to secure for the district a proper and sufficient water supply. My representations respecting other points referred to above were promised attention.

III.—THE BEDWELTY RURAL DISTRICT.

Area, 12,415 acres; population (1881), 13,200. Rateable value, 58,000*l*.

The population of this district is essentially of the same character as that of the two urban districts already described, consisting mainly of coal-miners and iron-workers. Three of the more populous villages—Blaina, Garnfach, and Nantyglo, in the Blaina Valley—having a total population of nearly 10,000, will it is expected be placed almost immediately under the jurisdiction of a new urban authority. The remaining population is included in scattered villages to the south and west of the registration district.

The following Table (No. III.) gives the average mortality rates of recent years of the different component parts of the district at present under the jurisdiction of the Rural Authority:—

TABLE No. III.

District.	Popula- tion.	Average Annual Birth-rate per 1,000.	Average Infant Mortality (deaths under 1 year to 1,000 Births).	Average annual Death-rate per 1,000 of the population during five years 1880-84, from under-mentioned causes.							
				All causes.	Small-pox.	Measles.	Scarlatina.	Diphtheria.	Whooping-cough.	Fever.	Diarrhoea.
Aberystroth (Blaina, Garnfach, Nantyglo). }	9,593	39.0	163	27.0	—	1.4	2.6	0.04	0.9	0.70	1.3
New Tredegar and Cwm- syfiog. }	1,127	49.8	150	27.3	—	0.6	0.8	0.2	4.8	—	—
Rock District and Black- wood. }	2,477	33.1	152	22.4	—	0.7	1.4	0.6	0.2	0.32	0.2
Corresponding average of England and Wales, for two years 1881-2. }	—	33.8	135	19.2	0.08	0.38	0.53	0.13	0.5	0.13	0.6

The sanitary condition of the populous villages mentioned above is really deplorable. There are many rows of houses of plan similar to that of the sketches given in the report on Ebbw Vale; and very many of these houses, from their excessive dampness, the want of proper ventilation and light, and from age and neglect, are quite unfit for habitation. The almost entire absence of sewers throughout the district, and the general absence of any proper privy-accommodation, have led, moreover, to the accumulation around the habitations of all sorts of sewage nuisances. And many wretched, ill-ventilated, hovels are overcrowded.

The inhabitants generally are still destitute of any proper water-supply. Those of Garnfach and Nantyglo, and of parts of Blaina, have to resort to small "springs" amongst the neighbouring hills; and in dry weather, or during severe weather, when the hill-paths are difficult to traverse, there has been almost positive dearth.

All this was pointed out in my previous report, but so far there has been little amelioration. An attempt has been made to sewer one or two small localities, but even this work, so trifling in amount, has not been carried out on proper sanitary principles. A small expense has been incurred likewise in providing a water-supply for Cwmsyfiog, an outlying village; and perhaps the removal of ashes and house-refuse, which the Authority provide for in the more populous parts of their district, is somewhat more promptly effected than heretofore.

As regards the water-supply of Blaina, Garnfach, and Nantyglo there is, however, prospect of speedy improvement, for arrangements have now been definitively entered into for the supply to these villages of water from the reservoirs belonging to the Ebbw Vale Sanitary Authority.

The building byelaws of the Authority are not adequately enforced. No provision has been made for the isolation of infectious diseases, nor has either mortuary or disinfecting chamber been supplied.

Blackwood, a village which at the time of my last inspection had recently experienced an outbreak of diphtheria, remains in much the same sanitary condition; that is to say, it suffers from the want of water, a supply of which might, it is believed, be obtained at a comparatively small cost, and from the absence of proper sewerage.

At an interview which I had with the Authority I gave them in some detail the results of my inspection. Surprise was expressed by individual members that some of the more glaring defects enumerated should exist in the district; but, apart from my own previous report, the reports of their own Medical Officer of Health, had they been duly considered, might have afforded the Authority at least sufficient information to lead them to further inquiry. It was resolved at this meeting to advertise for a surveyor at a fixed salary, for the purpose of drawing up plans for the sewerage

of the several villages of the district; and I am since informed by the Clerk that communications have been opened with a neighbouring authority on the subject of hospital provision. The agreement with the Ebbw Vale Local Board as to the supply of water to Blaina, &c., was signed at the meeting in question. There seems, therefore, prospect that important improvements will be set on foot in this district ere long; it will be absolutely necessary, however, for any authority having the sanitary charge of Blaina, Garnfach, and Nantyglo, to face the difficulty of dealing with dwellings that are totally unfit for habitation.

(Signed) JOHN SPEAR.
